

REMARKS

With regard to the claims:

A new set of claims is submitted herewith taking into consideration all of the Claim Objections and Claim Rejections presented in the Office Action. It is believed that informalities objections have been remedied in Claim 1 by referring to the outer surfaces using the definite article.

With regard to the objections to Claims 1 and 3 under 35 USC § 102 for lack of novelty:

Reference is made to DE 3736266 (Neff et al.) It should first be pointed out that the claim for consideration in the present application refers specifically to "fixing plates", implying that beams of rectangular cross section will be joined flat on and not tilted up on edge as shown in Neff. The Neff construction appears to attempt to exploit the increased bending moment available by putting the beams on edge. The present invention has an entirely different purpose which is to be as versatile as possible while using the same basic fixing plates and beams. By adhering to modular dimensions, it is possible to join together smaller and larger beams of rectangular cross section in many different combinations using a limited number of fixing plate dimensions. The use of these fixing plates will necessarily restrict the arrangement of the beams so that all of the beam surfaces are either parallel or orthogonal to every other surface. There can be no edge-up diamond shaped arrangement as in Neff, which is as was mentioned designed for another purpose. Module configurations are not possible in the Neff system.

With regard to the objections to Claims 2, 5 and 6 under 35 USC § 103 for obviousness:

Claims 2, 3 5 and 6 are all ultimately dependent on Claim 1 which we maintain has novelty and is non-obvious over Neff, even in combination with US 5 873 564 (Bisch)

Conclusion

The amended main claim is now rendered novel and non-obvious over the prior art.

In the event there are any questions concerning this Amendment, or the application in general, the Examiner is respectfully urged to telephone the undersigned so that prosecution of the application may be expedited.

No additional fees are believed to be due at this time however if necessary to effect a timely response the Commissioner is authorised to deduct the necessary fees from Deposit account No. 501249.

Respectfully submitted,

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